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News Letter

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SPRING TIME IS GARDEN TIME

One of the recommendations made at the Conference of Garden Leaders held in Washington January 10-11 was that a long-time program of urban, suburban, and rural home gardening in the broader sense be developed for America, because experience has shown that gardening can—
... Help feed the family better by providing more protective foods.
... Help feed the family economically.
... Give healthful recreation.
... Furnish valuable educational and esthetic interests for youth and adult alike.
... Stimulate the year-round use of fruits and vegetables in the diet, purchased as well as home grown.
... Help feed the Nation in time of emergency.
... Improve community surroundings and develop better community life.

This planning conference was sponsored by the USDA Extension Service and Paul C. Stark, Director of the National Garden Program, to consider progress already made and to make plans to maintain and increase interest in gardening. Mr. Stark pointed out that two assets gained from the war program were (1) the training people got in raising food in Victory Gardens and (2) the appreciation they developed for vegetables in their meals. These assets should be preserved through continued encouragement of gardening, he said, and reminded the audience that through gardening people change their food habits. They enjoy eating the vegetables they grow and the taste they develop causes them to buy more of the commercially grown vegetables.

School and community gardens are of special interest to workers in school lunch programs. They know that such gardens can contribute the essential green and yellow vegetables and tomatoes so apt to be lacking in children's diets as well as other items needed for variety. The products not needed for fresh use can be canned or frozen for winter meals. The

savings can provide substantial help in stretching school lunch dollars to serve more children.

An example of how much even a small garden contributes is given by Frances C. Elam of Mobank, Tex., who writes: "Last spring the cook in our lunch room set tomato plants as foundation plants around our kitchen. This fall, dry as it has been, we have been able to serve fresh tomatoes three times weekly from the vines. Besides, they look pretty growing there."

Sometimes home gardeners will earmark one or two rows of vegetables in their gardens for school lunch use.

The first step in developing a garden program is to obtain volunteer local or area leaders, who will organize a garden committee to sponsor a program. Such a committee can obtain local support and action through help of the extension service, the press, local business, women's groups, and other organizations, and in other ways make the program go. As a leader you can give no more valuable service perhaps than to lend your support with others in the organization of such a committee.

FOOD PRESERVATION IN SCHOOL LUNCH KITCHENS

What consideration is being given in your State to training school lunch cooks in canning and freezing methods? A survey made in 1947 reveals that foods were being canned in considerable quantities in school lunch kitchens in practically all States. This practice is growing, particularly where schools do not have access to community canneries and have to depend on their own facilities.

Schools find canning and freezing an economical way to take care of small lots of foods that are in excess of their current needs. Furthermore, they find it advantageous to process price-support commodities. Some canning or freezing is carried on all during the school year and continued during the summer when donated foods or those grown in school

gardens are available, or when foods are abundant and may be purchased at low cost.

There is real need in many areas to plan a training program for school lunch cooks doing this work. Where States do not have home-economics trained school lunch supervisors it is necessary to look to other agencies which have food preservation specialists. Nutrition committees might want to see what is being done and what assistance they can give. School lunch directors will probably welcome any suggestions made by nutrition committees about how food preservation training programs might be set up for school lunch cooks.

Some States have already recognized the need and are providing training for cooks in canning and freezing methods.

In some localities Public Health nutritionists and county home demonstration agents are sponsoring workshops and institutes. A few State colleges are including food preservation along with food preparation and menu-making in their courses for school lunch cooks.

One of the best ways to train workers is through a workshop or institute. A workshop on methods of freezing foods sponsored by the State Department of Health was held in Dayton, Ohio, in the laboratories of the Frigidaire Corporation January 17-19. About 20 home economists representing public utilities, Red Cross, Dayton University, extension service, Dayton Health Department, farm women, and hospital dietitians took part. Instruction was given by the Chicago PMA food preservation specialist. Each person had a chance to prepare and package for freezing different kinds of fruits, vegetables, meats, and precooked foods. These home economists are now available to help school lunch cooks in Ohio counties with their food preservation work.

PMA food preservation specialists will welcome the opportunity to work with nutrition committees in planning training activities and assisting with workshops. You can reach them through the Area Field Supervisor, Food Distribution Programs Branch, Production and Marketing Administration, United States Department of Agriculture, at the following addresses: 641 Washington St., New York 14, N. Y. 449 W. Peachtree St. NE., Atlanta 3, Ga. 623 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago 5, Ill. 101 Norman Bldg., Dallas 2, Tex. 30 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco, Calif.

PLENTIFUL FOODS PROGRAM

The enclosed leaflet outlines the plentiful foods program and explains how the merchandising attention of the food trade—the wholesaler and retailer—is being spotlighted on plentiful foods.

Cooperation in this program by the retail store is reaching into more and more communities through the direct assistance of both national and local organizations. These include the chains, the independents, and the cooperatives, as well as the wholesalers and allied groups. With all these groups, representatives of the Department of Agriculture are taking the program into metropolitan cities and into small towns throughout the country. They are making personal calls on individuals in the food trade, as well as their associations, and on restaurants, institutions, women's clubs, public utilities, nutritionists, and others reaching the consumer with market-basket information.

The mutual advantages to both the seller and the buyer of food are pointed out—that increased consumption of plentiful foods will mean more volume for the store and lower food costs and better nutrition for the homemaker.

The basic list of foods in plentiful supply, prepared by specialists of the Department and checked with State and local agencies, is issued each month by the Food Distribution Programs Branch of PMA. The list is sent to hundreds of national food organizations and allied groups, and literally to thousands of State and local groups. Many publish the list in full for their membership, including an impressive number of "house organs" and the more general food and consumer publications.

A supporting informational campaign connects with the newspapers and radio. Information on plentiful foods is regularly channeled to daily and weekly newspapers all over the country, reinforced with photographs, recipes, menus, factual data, and special stories. One recent photograph of plentiful foods was widely carried in Negro papers, sometimes on front pages. Plentiful foods information, likewise, is sent to radio stations, providing radio food editors with factual data and prepared scripts for spot announcements and programs. Commercial radio stations are encouraged to mention plentiful foods by

the fact that the Advertising Council has approved this program as a public service endeavor.

The beneficial effects of this program on the consumption of plentiful foods can be measured, although not exactly. In a Special Abundant Food Program on cranberries, several favorable factors produced an increase of 50 percent in the consumption of fresh cranberries during the fall months of 1948 as compared with 1947. Prices were lower, and the cranberry industry put on an energetic promotion campaign. But note also a heavy volume of USDA information in an 8-week period directed to the food trade, and to press, radio, advertisers, and merchandisers. During this period, cranberry information prepared by the PMA Information Office in New York went out to 120 farm program directors of radio stations, 480 broadcasters and other information channels, 360 food editors of weekly and daily newspapers, and 510 trade journals, trade firms, restaurant groups, processors, distributors, and manufacturers. In addition, Food Distribution Programs Branch sent material to 1,344 individual members of the food trade and allied groups. Probably you recall hearing and reading about cranberries every day in November and December.

Members of nutrition committees can get the plentiful foods list from the PMA offices listed in the preceding article on food preservation.

NEWS OF STATE COMMITTEES

VIRGINIA.—With chairman Janet Cameron presiding, the State Nutrition Committee reviewed the goals which had been set up in 1946 for the committee and considered what needs to be done to implement each one. The long-time goals are—

... To coordinate nutrition and health programs of various agencies.

... To support legislation sanctioned by the group.

... To plan at least one program annually of interest to all agencies.

The immediate goals are—

... To request representation on the State Health Council and to invite the Council in turn to send a representative to the committee, in order to foster appreciation that nutrition is basic to health.

... To check the results of the Albemarle Nutrition Survey to see whether to make future surveys.

... To decide what further steps should

be taken toward legislation requiring enrichment of white bread and flour.

... To find out what county and city nutrition committees are doing and report these activities in either a State publication or in the Nutrition News Letter.

In addition to making plans to carry out these goals, the committee voted to have a subcommittee develop a constitution for submission at the next meeting and discussed methods of financing its work. It recommended to the subcommittee appointed to draw up plans for the work of the coming year the findings of the Richmond survey and suggested more adequate use of these data. Representatives of the various agencies present told how they had used the report of the survey and how they would make further use of it.

PENNSYLVANIA.—Dr. Herbert T. Kelly, the past chairman of the Committee on Nutrition of the Medical Society of Pennsylvania, is the new chairman of the State Nutrition Council, succeeding Dr. Clara M. Shryock, who died in October.

Dr. Shryock was instrumental in bringing the hot lunch program into Cambria County schools. She and the Pennsylvania Nutrition Council, with the cooperation of the Ellen H. Richards Institute, arranged for a 3-year nutrition study in Lower Yoder Township.

Nutrition tests were given to 100 elementary school children representing a cross section of the township and to interested mothers and teachers. Results of the test were interpreted in individual conferences with parents and children studied in terms of their food needs. The first year emphasis was placed on improving the dietary in homes, especially by growing more gardens and increasing green, leafy, and yellow vegetables in family meals.

During the second year, a school lunch was established in the Edgewood School. This project, like the earlier home education, was correlated with classroom teaching. Good Breakfast Campaigns, Clean Plate Clubs, a Garden Club, letters to parents, posters, and illustrated talks in health classes and PTA meetings were devices used. A large public county meeting was held January 31 to award certificates of merit to the children who made the best progress.

As a result of finding many children with poor nutritional status in Lycoming County, a cooperative nutrition program

Planned by the Nutrition Division of the State Nursing Service, State Department of Health, and the County Superintendent of Schools. A preliminary program consisted of lessons and demonstrations dealing with the importance of proper food selection for good health, and stressing adequate breakfasts and lunches. Movies, slides, food models, posters, leaflets, and colored books for young children provided visual reinforcement of the ideas given. As a result, 19 schools volunteered to try animal feeding experiments. Each school experimented with two pairs of albino rats. The pupils fed one pair a mixture of ground whole wheat, whole milk, and salt. The second pair were fed prepared corn cereal and soft drinks. After 3 or 4 weeks, the second pair were given the whole wheat and milk mixture. The children kept weight records and observations of the physical conditions of the rats. Comparing the two pairs of rats made a vivid impression on the children, especially the rapid gains in weight during the second period when the two poorly fed rats were given whole wheat and milk.

WEST VIRGINIA.—The Third Annual Nutrition Day held on November 4 was cosponsored by the State Nutrition Committee, the Upper Monongahela Valley Dental Society, and the Marion County Medical Society. During the open meeting in the afternoon there was a talk on "Nutrition in Our Schools" and a panel discussion on "The Individual's Responsibility in Promoting Good Nutrition in His Community." The panel brought out the following—

1. Attitude is important
2. Practice it—be an example
3. Keep growing—be informed
4. Start where people are—use terms and language they understand
5. Cooperate with agencies and organizations working for good nutrition
6. Make teaching practical
7. Use the school lunch as a tool for educational experiences
8. Make a survey in a school unit of foods consumed in 1 day
9. Check a local grocery store as to purchases for 1 month (upper grade pupils can do this)

The annual dinner was attended by about 70 doctors, dentists, nurses, nutrition workers, and others interested in nutrition, according to Chairman Eloise S. Cofer. The talk, "Nutrition in Health and Disease" pointed up the value of good nutrition for the individual.

The morning and early afternoon session was devoted to business of the State Nutrition Committee, during which Miss Cofer was reelected chairman.

The Subcommittee on Teaching Nutrition in the Elementary Schools reported that courses in nutrition for elementary teachers were offered at Shepherd, Marshall, and Glenville Colleges in the summer session. Concord and West Liberty gave special courses during the fall, and practically all colleges are planning for programs next summer.

As a result of a survey of all hospitals in the State, the Hospital Dietitians Subcommittee recommended that (1) high school students be encouraged to make dietetics a career and (2) a hospital be found to sponsor a training program which would meet the standards set up by the American Dietetic Association for internship for registered dietitians.

The Saturday nutrition program put on by the Vitamin C Subcommittee over the Clarksburg radio station is having good acceptance.

NEW MATERIALS

"Our Food and Our Health" (16 mm., sound, color, 25 min.) is a new film issued by the Department of the Army, Institute of Pathology, Washington 25, D. C. Intended for use in teaching soldiers to eat well-balanced meals, it can also be used to show school children the importance of a good diet. It is available without charge from the Chief of the Army Medical Illustration Services at the above address. The borrower, however, pays return postage.

"Whenever You Eat" (16 mm., sound, color, 12 min.) shows teen-age boys and girls in various activities and suggested meals for 1 day which will give them the foods they need. Produced by the National Dairy Council, 111 N. Canal Street, Chicago 6, Ill.

Sincerely yours,

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